



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20410-5000

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
FOR PUBLIC AND INDIAN HOUSING

Dear Public Housing Community:

It is with enthusiasm that the Department presents the first Public Housing Occupancy Guidebook in over twenty years. This Guidebook furthers the Department's Rental Housing Integrity Improvement Project (RHIIP), a priority of Secretary Martinez intended to reduce income and rent errors addressing issues identified in the *Quality Control for Rental Assistance Subsidies Determinations*, a study completed by the Department in 2001. In addition, the guidebook is designed to serve as a reference tool to assist public housing staff and HUD with a range of other issues related to public housing occupancy, from application and rent calculations through ongoing occupancy to lease termination.

Overall, the tone of the guidebook is useful and user-friendly. The guidebook is divided into seven parts: (1) Civil Rights; (2) Admissions; (3) Public Housing Income and Program Rents; (4) Continued Occupancy; (5) Public Housing Lease; (6) Grievance Procedures; and (7) Domestic Violence. The guidebook also contains appendices of sample policies and forms that can be used by PHA staff.

In every instance, an attempt was made to produce a guidebook that is clear, accurate, and consistent with governing law and regulation. PIH solicited public comments to the draft guidebook as well as the views of PHAs, industry advocates and training consultants.

The biggest challenge for this effort was addressing the usage of prescriptive language in the draft guidebook that made it difficult to differentiate between those policies that are required and those that are optional or to be left to the discretion of the PHA. As such, an exercise of investigating every occurrence of prescriptive terms, like "must" and "shall", by researching each back to their statutory or regulatory origin was conducted. These references are identified and numbered as they occur in the document and listed in the "Endnotes" section of the guidebook.

The Department is hopeful that the guidebook will serve as a useful reference tool and welcomes your feedback. Your interest in the Department's programs is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Michael S. Liu
Assistant Secretary
for Public and Indian Housing